








Beauty

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
That which is striking and good; but that which is good is always beautiful. --Ninon De L'Enclos		You can take no credit for beauty at sixteen. But if you are beautiful at sixty, it will be your soul's own doing. -- Marie Carmichael Stopes		1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	There is nothing in a caterpillar that tells you it's going to be a butterfly. --R. Buckminster Fuller			Everything has beauty, but not everyone sees it. --Confucius		Beauty is whatever gives you joy. --Hugh Nibley 
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	Beauty is not in the face; beauty is a light in the heart. --Kahlil Gibran 	 Flag Day		We ourselves possess beauty when we are true to our own being; ugliness is in going over to another order; knowing ourselves, we are beautiful; in self-ignorance, we are ugly. --Plotinus		
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
 Father's Day 		 First Day of Summer				
25	26	27	28	29	30	
			Beauty is the purgation of superfluities. --Michelangelo			The average girl would rather have beauty than brains because she knows the average man can see much better than he can think. -- Source Unknown 



Just a Thought.

This month I will succumb to the same numerical digitalization as that of the suggested (but rarely enforced) speed of travel on Kansas county roads. On those roads, it's generally known among the natives that there are not enough deputies in the all of Pawnee County to snag every crazed teen (CT) or distraught housewife (DH) who decides to race down those newly blacktopped avenues looking for freedom. However, if they, in their adventure, happen fast upon an opossum burdened with eight opossumettes hanging from her downunder waddling methodically across the road, should that CT or DH send the said animal family to their great reward a little sooner than expected, any further damage would be lain squarely at the gas pedal of the driver.

Aging is like that. Good genes may have dictated that your skin be tight and smooth for an extended amount of time than that of your smoke-chimney friends, but if you insist on living in the moment with that suntan or make french fries your principal meal, well, the guarantee on those pores are null and void.

The awareness that I was showing signs of age has been whispering to me for awhile, but somehow with the realization of the impending 55th anniversary of life, my looks seem to have taken a nosedive. The eyes are sagging, and spidery lines around my mouth are showing up at an alarming rate. With all of these signs of impending doom, who could blame me for signing up with a professional for one of those complete makeovers that are so popular now. Even though I haven't so much as set foot in or near a cosmetic house or counter for an embarrassing number of decades (except for the twice-a-year makeup base purchase), I was determined to live out the last half of my life with the same stately skin and bright-eyed blush that I had enjoyed the first half.

At the assigned time I arrived, bravely carrying my makeup and skin care items in a plain brown paper bag. The perfectly colored makeup artist, grasping the bottom of the bag, poured out my paltry items, wrinkled her perfectly smooth brow and said, "Hummm," with definite negative reverberations.

Looking at me, then my things, then at me again, she sighed and said, "Let's just start at the beginning." So much for hoping some of my surplus potions might deflect the cost of this project.

Grabbing my face, the expert went into action. She washed, she slathered, she smoothed, she defoliated. She pulled and plucked, tinted and lined. She stained and refined, whitened and shaded. Two hours later, after memorizing every pour of my face in a five-magnification mirror, I knew her life's story and she knew mine. The reveal (as they call it on decorating shows) was just short of astounding. I looked like the faces in the three-foot blowup posters that decorated the windows of the shop. If I had had a sequined chiffon evening gown on I'd have danced the whole night through like Cinderella. Had my hair been shined and piled gracefully on my head, I'd have turned every male eye on the road between the building and my van, causing massive car pileups and yards of twisted metal in my wake. I was hot!

"Equip me with what I need," I demanded. And the professional began collecting. The smoke rising from her adding machine should have been a warning that the cost of maintaining such euphoria might be more than I could manage. But I was drunk with the power of the powders and mystery liquids, to heck with the price! Gliding around the store the professional gathered the gold-edged boxes of all sizes and fit them carefully in a small pink paper bag with ribbon handle. Lifting the prized package with one hand and setting it before me, she reviewed every item and said, "That comes to a mere \$361.34 for everything. What a bargain!"

Now I have no doubt that everything in that small pink bag was an indispensable part of the beautification of the second half of my life. I'm sure it was, compared to the elite brands of world supermodels, quite reasonable in price. But to this poor middle-aged graphic designer who cuts coupons and stocks up on two-for-ones at Target, it was a humongous investment in a face I only see for a few minutes every morning without my glasses on. I was speechless; flabbergasted. I was in instant buyer's remorse.

Stunned, I handed the professional my credit card, mentally calculating the number of payments I would need to make to get my beautification paid off by my next birthday -- should I live that long.

I went home, set my husband down, and confessed everything. Even with the qualifiers like, "It's one of the less expensive makeups on the market", and "This supply should last me a year or more," the explanation sounded weak and wanton. He took it pretty well, but his periodic remarks like, "You know, I think you look like you're about 16!" were clearly overkill designed to mask his despair at the lascivious spending of a vain, aging woman.

Determined to salvage something of value in this fiasco, I faithfully follow the application of six different mystery bottles morning and night. And after a reality adjustment, have modified the makeup design to be of a more natural, if less glamorous, presentation. But, you know something? Maybe it's my imagination, but after I gave away that five-power mirror magnifier, it seems like the lines around my eyes are actually softer, and the wrinkles at my mouth -- well, I can hardly see them at all! At this rate, by the time I'm 80, I'll have the face of a 25-year old.

Now, if I can just get the rest of my body to retrograde.

Joy

Be your own work of art.
Cultivate friends, passions,
a distinctive style. Learn,
dare, and grow.
Beauty is the bonus
of a well-lived life.

-- Oprah Winfrey

Oops!

My sincerest apology to all of you who received maimed and/or mashed pens in the May issue. My local postal worker assured me that if I added additional postage that all would be well. I trusted, and in that trust forewent two of my three company rules:

- ▲ When in doubt, ask an expert;
- ▲ Ask someone who's done it;
- ▲ Prepare for the worst.

My friend, who had done similar projects, had one word for me: *Bubblewrap!* So the next pen or other delicate item I send you will be fully clothed in air and plastic.

Life is a learning experience!

Granite Steps Country Blueberry Coffee Cake

recipe courtesy of Paula Deen

1/2 cup packed light brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 (12-ounce) can buttermilk biscuits
1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, melted
1 cup quick-cooking rolled oats
1 1/2 cups fresh or frozen blueberries
1/2 cup sugar

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Generously grease a 9-inch square baking dish. In a small bowl, combine brown sugar and cinnamon and mix well with a fork. Separate biscuit dough into 10 biscuits. Cut each biscuit into quarters, and dip each piece in melted butter and coat with brown sugar mixture. Arrange in a single layer in baking dish. Sprinkle with 1/2 cup of the oats.

Combine blueberries and sugar in a bowl and toss to coat. Spoon over oats and biscuits and sprinkle with remaining 1/2 cup oats. Drizzle remaining melted butter on top. Bake for 20 minutes or until cake is golden brown and center is done. Cool for 20 minutes. Serve warm.



A friend said that I need to have a motive behind the insertions of my news/calendars, that it should be a look-what-I-can-do-for-you, or an attention-getter to help you remember why I am in business. Perhaps I lack drive and I certainly have trouble with focus, but I honestly have no motive behind my little inclusions. I am the toddler who brings you a picked blossom just because it's pretty, the second grader who paints you a picture of the delight he feels when he sees an apple tree. No more, no less.

This month I've enclosed a stick of my favorite Big Red gum. Have a chew on me! My only motivation is having fun.